

# report



meeting      ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

date            16 December 2010

agenda item number 6

## REPORT OF THE HEAD OF THE YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICE

### **Report back on an approved visit abroad: Youth Support Service young people's residential visit to Gramsh, Albania**

#### **Purpose of report**

1. To report back on the outcomes of a visit approved under the travel and accommodation policy.

#### **Background**

2. Three County Council officers from the Youth Support Service participated in the planned residential visit to Gramsh, Albania from 13 – 18 October 2010 and two County Council officers from the Youth Support Service carried out a pre-visit from 22 – 25 August 2010 in order to ensure all relevant Health and Safety procedures were adhered to.
3. The County Council's travel, accommodation, conference and member development policies provide for written reports to be produced which describe the business of the event and an evaluation written by the council's representatives of its success, with particular reference to the business of the council or the achievement of learning objectives.
4. This report has been prepared by the Head of the Youth Support Service, in discussion with the relevant Service Manager and those County Council officers who attended the residential visit.

#### **Representative's report**

#### **Purpose/aim of the event or visit**

5. This visit was arranged to further work the County Council is supporting through encouraging young people's voluntary involvement with the

charity National Police Aid Convoy and its distribution of aid to communities in Albania.

6. Young people from Youth Service groups in Newark and Sherwood have been working voluntarily with the National Police Aid Convoy (NPAC) over the last 10 months. The young people are from the Newark and Sherwood Youth Assembly and the Skills for Employment group in Ollerton. They have been involved in collecting, sorting, packing and loading items donated by organisations and members of the public for distribution by the NPAC to communities in Albania, Zambia and Pakistan.
7. The young people have also been part of a task group which has collected and sorted donations of books for members of the British Forces in Afghanistan.
8. The young people discussed with youth workers the possibility of extending their involvement in the project by going to Albania and supporting the distribution of aid items. It was felt by youth workers that this would give young people a greater insight into the impact of the work of the NPAC and their involvement in it whilst, at the same time, giving them other new experiences they would otherwise not have.
9. The group of 9 included 5 disabled young people as well ex-offenders and homeless young people. A successful application was made by young people for funding from the Youth Opportunities Fund to support a visit to Albania. The visit, which also involved 3 members of staff from the Youth Service, took place between 13 and 18 October 2010.

### **Achievement of objectives**

10. During the visit staff were able to work with young people and support them in discovering the direct effect on their voluntary work in Nottinghamshire on developing communities in Albania.
11. The majority of time in Albania was spent in Gramsh where young people had the opportunity of visiting and meeting a variety of places and people. They met students at a local language school (which had been furnished by NPAC), visited a fire station and spent time socialising with local people at a leisure and sports centre.
12. The group also had the chance to distribute items that had been transported from Mansfield to a variety of institutions. They visited a local school and gave out bags containing pens, paper and other sundry items before distributing "baby bundles" to the maternity ward at the hospital in Gramsh, They also visited local football clubs and donated equipment (including football kits and footballs) to the teams before getting involved in games.

13. The young people visited an orphanage in Albastan and distributed toys, games and clothes they had collected for the children.
14. Before leaving Albania the young people went to Tirana and had lunch with the Albanian Government Minister for English Language who spoke to them about the impact of their work in his country. The Minister presented young people with certificates acknowledging their achievements.
15. Young people benefited from their involvement in the visit in a number of ways. There were significant developments in their social skills which were evidenced, for example, in their ability to work effectively and efficiently as a team. They also encountered situations which many of them found difficult (for example witnessing examples of people living in extreme poverty) which they learned to deal with in a reasoned and mature way.
16. Young people's knowledge about our own country's political system improved as they understood the importance of democracy and looked at Albania as an example of how alternative systems can be less effective.
17. Young people's knowledge of humanitarian aid and how it impacts on people's lives was improved and particularly important was the way in which they were able to witness the impact of their own efforts.
18. Young people spent a lot of time comparing their own circumstances and opportunities with those of their peers in Albania. This has led to a greater appreciation of, for example, education and health provision in Nottinghamshire and a desire to make the most of the opportunities available to them.
19. Relationships between staff and young people benefited from working together during the visit and this has enabled youth workers to gain a greater insight into young people's individual circumstances and thereby offer appropriate support and development opportunities.

### **Statutory and policy implications**

20. This report has been produced to ensure compliance with the Council's Travel and Accommodation policy and current arrangements for approving attendance at conferences, seminars and Member Training events.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

21. That the report be noted.

**CHRIS WARREN**

Head of Youth Support Service

**Legal Services comments (LM/8.11.2010)**

21. The report is for noting only.

**Financial comments of the Service Director – Finance (NDR)**

22. Nil

**Background papers available for public inspection**

None

**Electoral division(s) affected**

Nottinghamshire

M19C2700